

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

Additional Views of Reps. Edward Markey, John Dingell, Henry Waxman, Rick Boucher, Edolphus Towns, Frank Pallone, Sherrod Brown, Anna Eshoo, Bart Stupak, Eliot Engel, Albert Wynn, Gene Green, Diana DeGette, Lois Capps, Thomas Allen, Jan Schakowsky, Hilda Solis, Jay Inslee, Tammy Baldwin on the National Institutes of Health Reform Act

The National Institutes of Health is our country's premier research institution. It embodies our hopes for treating or curing debilitating diseases like heart disease, Alzheimer's, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, cancer and so many other illnesses that American families battle every day. It also our best hope for containing the health care costs of the Baby Boomers. If we don't act now, the chronic disease epidemic and its economic costs will skyrocket over the next 25 years. We must invest in research today that will yield the cures tomorrow.

We are concerned that the 5% authorization level included in this legislation sets a cap on the funding available for NIH for the duration of the authorization. Further this 5% increase will barely keep up with the high rate of inflation. Biomedical inflation, as measured by the Biomedical Research and Development Price Index (BRDPI), is generally 3-4 percent per year. In some years it is even as high as 5-10%. In a year in which biomedical inflation is over 5%, this bill would authorize a real cut to NIH.

We have already seen the impact on research when the NIH budget fails to account for increases in inflation. Since 2003, NIH has lost 11 percent of its research funding when adjusted for inflation. Already this has done significant damage to NIH's ability to support cutting edge research and encourage new investigators. The impact has been so significant that even top-tier researchers with established track records of publishing in top journals are struggling to get funding for their research.

In committee, we supported an amendment offered by Mr. Markey to ensure that the bill authorized a real 5% increase in NIH funding above the rate of inflation. This amendment was endorsed by numerous research and patient advocacy organizations including, *AIDS Action, The AIDS Institute, AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition (AVAC), The Alliance for Aging Research, The Alliance for Microbicide Development, The Alzheimer's Foundation of America, American Psychological Association, amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston Medical Center, Boston University School of Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Cambridge Health Alliance, Caritas Carney Hospital, Caritas St. Elizabeth's Medical Center, Children's Hospital Boston, Consortium of Social Science Associations, The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Drug Development Committee of the AIDS Treatment Advocacy Campaign (ATAC), Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS foundation, Faulkner Hospital, The Friends of the National Institute on Aging, Harvard University, Lahey Clinic Medical Center, Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, Massachusetts General Hospital, National AIDS Treatment Advocacy Project (NATAP), The New England Council, The Schepens Eye Research Institute, Treatment Action Group (TAG), Tufts New England Medical Center.*

Although the amendment was rejected on a party-line vote, we continue to believe that Congress should provide at least 5 percent annual increases in NIH funding above the level of biomedical inflation, so that NIH can maintain and expand its life-saving research.

Edward J. Markey

Rick Boucher

Henry Waxman

Ed Royce

Gene Miller

Strom Thurmond

Frank Lautenberg

Barack Obama

Sam Brownback

John McCain

Tom Harkin

Diana DeBette

Heldt Solis

Lois Capps

Mark Shook

Jeff Pendergast

Frank Pallone

John Dingell

Albert R. Brown